

Regional Services Council Minutes
Region 3
May 19, 2008, @ 10:00
Child and Parent Services, 1000 W. Hively, Elkhart, IN 46517

Members and Guests Present: Linda Cioch, Director St. Joseph County DCS; Peggy Shively, Director Kosciusko County DCS; Michael Carroll, Director Marshall County DCS; Tony Sommer, Director Elkhart County DCS; Sally Mahnken, CASA Director Kosciusko County; Sally Greenlee, FCM Marshall County; Terri Zorning, Supervisor St. Joseph County DCS; Christine Roose, Elkhart County Court Services; Judge Peter J. Nemeth, St. Joseph County; Bonita Schrock, Oaklawn Center; Candy Yoder, CAPS; Rhonda Gipson Willis, SAFY; Tony Fingerle, Lifeline; Jim Bolins, Family Focus Inc.; Ken Shields, SCAN; Michael Lewondowski, SCAN.

Welcome/Introductions of members & Guests: Introductions were made by all present.

SCAN: Rachel approved to contact Celia Leaird. Celia stated approval was given for the service monies for the flex funds. The Regional Council needs to give approval first. There is a \$500.00 limit per family per year. To date, the flex funds in Region 3 has spent \$3,400.00 since June of 2007. SCAN will continue to provide funds to the Region and keep you aware of what is available.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the last Regional Services Council meeting for Region 3 were distributed for review and were accepted as written.

Practice Reform Update:

Michael Carroll from Marshall County said everyone has been trained as facilitators and 2 new workers to complete their training soon. They have been able to keep 70 children in their own homes. This increase is due to the Child & Family Team Meetings and believes this is making a difference.

Tony Sommer of Elkhart County said we have 45 state workers with 32 new ones completing their training, 2 workers are on leave and 7 currently in training and ready to graduate this month and 8 more to graduate in June.

Peggy Shively from Kosciusko County has everyone trained. The workers are pleased with the process. This new training has been a plus for them. Family conferences before could not invite people to set in. Now they can invite relatives, friends, Pastors and other church members, etc.

Linda Cioch of St. Joseph County said they have noticed that families have started inviting church members to sit in on their conferences. She would like to have a Town Hall type meeting and invite pastors to attend.

Overview of RSC Legislation effective 7-01-08.

Fay Russell was not able to attend the meeting today but Linda said Fay will be sending an email out to everyone concerning funding sources, public testimony, and evaluation of local child service needs, needs identification and what agency best to deliver it.

There seems to be a shortage of Emergency Shelter Care facilities. Elkhart County uses Bashor Home; however, if a child has been determined by the court to be a Juvenile Delinquent through probation, this child can not go to Bashor but to Juvenile Detention, back home, or some other type of placement. For DCS to utilize a locked facility, a child has to be adjudicated a delinquent. Bashor Home will also take kids from other counties.

Other Business: Question asked if Probation and DCS departments were going to be merged. Probation is quite concerned about this and the Judges are not in favor of it.

- . They both do the same job except Probation has the cases where a crime has been committed and DCS more with neglect and child abuse.

- . An investigator/assessment worker use to have 90 days to complete an investigation. Then with the addition of new caseworkers throughout the State of Indiana the time limit was changed to 60 days to completion and now it will be 30 days to complete an assessment. The counties can expect to do more In-home CHINS or Informal Adjustments for a 6 month time period.

- . Elkhart Co. uses the Local Coordinating Committee (LCC) which is a valuable community based team of people that usually meet every other week to discuss probation cases and possible institutional placement.

- . The State is doing the budgets for the counties for this coming year. Departments can send in comments and recommendations but the State will centralize the budgets.

- . The Departments are seeing an increase in cases. Elkhart County has seen a rise in sex abuse cases and it seems like the perpetrators are getting younger.

- . If an assessment has been unsubstantiated but the family needs to have services, you can refer to SCAN to offer services.

- . Effective July 1st, it is hoped that DCS workers will have the smaller caseloads mandated by law which is an average of 12 open assessments and 17 children for ongoing caseloads.

Adjourn:

The next RSC Meeting will be Monday, June 16th @ the JJC in South Bend.